

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda item 12 b)

CX/FL 10/38/18

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION QUEBEC CITY, CANADA, MAY 3 - 7, 2010

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON ORGANIC AQUACULTURE (Prepared by European Union)

The EU considers that the CAC/GL 32, in order to preserve its role as a global benchmark for organic standards, should be updated to include organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production.

Therefore the EU proposes that new work be undertaken to elaborate provisions on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production.

Proposal for additional work to include aquaculture animal and seaweed production in the Guidelines for Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods

Inclusion of aquaculture and seaweed

While there are no internationally agreed regulations for organic aquaculture a number of governments are currently working on, or have completed, national regulations to complement the approved private sector standards which operate in this sector. For its part, the European Union adopted detailed production rules for organic aquaculture and seaweed production in 2009 via *Commission Regulation (EC) No 710/2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as regards laying down detailed rules on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production (published in the EU Official Journal on 6 August 2009 and available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>)*.

This aims to achieve a balance between the national rules existing in the EU Member States and the various private sector standards, so as to give a minimum standard for organic aquaculture and seaweed production. It will reduce the requirement for multiple certifications to access the EU market and ensure free movement of organic products, meeting the requirements of the legislation, in the single European market. This will apply equally to EU production and imported products providing equivalent guarantees. The new Regulation builds on the foundations of the new general EU organic rules introduced in 2007, which set out the objectives, principles and general production rules. It will apply from 1 July 2010 together with the obligation to use the new EU organic logo on pre-packaged goods produced in the EU.

Organic production can be seen in the context of the focus on sustainable farming systems where best environmental practice and the protection of biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources and the application of high animal welfare standards all combine to give products which are in line with the

preference of certain consumers for products produced using natural substances and processes and as an alternative to the more traditional intensive approach. The proportion of aquaculture products is increasing in international seafood trade and despite the economic recession there is a growing market for organic aquaculture products. In this context it is relevant to begin new work on organic aquaculture and seaweed with a view to inclusion of provisions in CAC/GL 32.

Project Document

Proposal for New Work – Codex Committee on Food Labelling

Proposal for additional work to include aquaculture animal and seaweed production in the Guidelines for Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods

Prepared by: European Union

Purposes and scope of the proposed standard:

The purpose is to include aquaculture animals and the collection and farming of seaweeds in the scope of CAC/GL32 on organically produced foods. For aquaculture animals this would mainly cover origin of the stock, husbandry practices and breeding, feed, disease prevention and veterinary treatment. For seaweed it would mainly cover water quality conditions as regards environment and health, sustainable practices, stock maintenance and use of inputs.

Its relevance and timeliness:

The aquaculture sector is currently the fastest growing segment in the international food market. The organic production of aquaculture animals and seaweed has been growing fast over the last decade and there has been significant growth in the market for these products. While very little reliable and detailed data is currently available, world aquaculture production is estimated to have reached 50,000 tonnes by industry sources¹. In order to facilitate the harmonization of requirements for organic aquaculture and seaweed products at the international level, the EU believes that it is both relevant and timely for Codex Alimentarius to commence new work in this area.

The main aspects to be covered:

These include conditions for the aquatic production environment, for impact on other species of animal, plant, algae and birds, separation of organic and non-organic production units and defining the suitability of the aquatic medium. For aquaculture animals the coverage would include detailed provisions on feed ingredients, animal husbandry conditions with reference in particular to maximum stocking densities in the production phase and conditions at the time of killing.

An assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities:

The volume of organic aquaculture production is growing fast. While the main market is in the richer countries, there is scope for growth of organic aquaculture in developing countries. There exists the possibility that divergent legislation in this field could give rise to multiple certification requirements, which in addition to being a heavy burden on producers can impede international trade. Without clear international guidelines there is also a greater risk that fraud could occur and damage the reputation and future prospects of the sector.

Relevance to Codex Strategic Objectives:

It can be complex and difficult to find agreement between the sector, non-governmental organisation and governments on criteria for organic aquaculture. The commencement of work on this area by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling is highly relevant so that global guidance, with the highest attainable criteria, will be available for this fast developing sector so as to ensure fair practice in organic seafood trade.

¹ Bergleiter, S et al (2009). Organic Aquaculture 2009 – Production and markets. Naturland e.V & Organic Services GmbH

Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents:

No work carried out on this field in other areas of Codex as far as the EU is aware.

Identification of any requirement for the availability of expert scientific advice:

None identified.

Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for:

None identified.

The proposed timeline:

Proposed start by CCFL in 2010 with a view to adoption by the Commission within three years.